has once beheld that unity?

XV

The Ethics of the Upanisads.

It is obvious that the ideal of the Upanisads is the becoming One with God. The world issues from God & must therefore seek its rest in God. "All birds go towards the tree intended for their abode, so all this goes to the supreme self" (Praśna IV. 7.). "May I enter Thee, such as Thou art, O Lord; May Thou O Lord, enter me ----- May I become well cleansed O Lord." (Taitt: I. 4.). "Thou art my resting place". (Taitt. I. 4.). The realisation of the oneness with God is the ideal of man. After ages of development, man alone has become conscious of the great scheme of the universe. He alone feels the summons of the infinite, and consciously grows towards the heavenly Stature awaiting him. The absolute is the deliberate goal of the finite self.

It is a state "far above hunger & thirst, above sorrow & confusion, above old age and death." "As the sun, the eye of the universe, remains far off & unaffected by all sickness that meets the eye, so also the One, the Atman, who dwells in all creatures, dwells afar & untouched by the sorrows of the world." To live in the world of plurality is indeed a dire misfortune. A return from the plurality to the One is the ideal goal. The

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most ultimate value. It is according to the Taittiriya Upanisad, "Prāṇārāmam manaḥ-ānandam, Śāntisamṛddham amṛtam," "the delight of life and mind, the fullness of peace and eternity." We have different kinds of pleasures answering to the different levels of our existence, the vital pleasure, the sensuous, the mental & the intellectual, but the highest is ānanda.

According to the Upanisads, duty is a means to the end of the highest perfection. Morality is valuable only as leading to it. The perfect ideal of our life is found only in the Eternal Reality. The law of morality is an invitation to become perfect, "even as Your heavenly Father is perfect."

The question has been asked — if all is one, how can we have moral relations? If the absolute is perfection, where is there any need for the effort to realise what is already accomplished? Monism does not mean an obliteration of the distinction of good and evil. The sense of otherness & multiplicity essential to ethical life is allowed for by the Upanisads. If we are called upon to love our neighbour it is because all are one in reality. My neighbour and myself are one in our inmost self, if the superficial & ephemeral distinctions are ~~transcended~~ transcended.

Mokṣa - literally means release, release from the bondage to the senseous and the individual, the narrow and the finite. It is the result of self enlargement and freedom. To live in perfect goodness is to realise one's life in all. This ideal for which the moral nature of man cries can be attained only if the finite self transcends its narrow individuality & identifies itself with the whole. The path of deliverance is the path of soul growth. The reality asserted by the Upanisads is the reality in which we are to abide by transcending our individuality in the highest.

It has been argued that there is no room for any ethical endeavour on the hypothesis that man is divine in nature. God is not in man in such an obvious fashion that he can possess Him without effort or struggle. God is present as a potentia or possibility & it is man's duty to lay hold of Him by face and action. If he does not do it, he fails in his duty as a man. The God in man is a task as well as a fact, a problem as well as a possession. Man in his ignorance identifies himself with the external wrappings the physical & mental envelopments. "Though the individual is lit with the divine Spark, he is not wholly divine. His divinity is not an actuality, but a

part of God aspiring to be the whole. As he is, he is dust and deity. God and brute crossed. It is the task of the moral life to eliminate the non-divine element, not by destroying it, but by suffusing it with the divine spirit." (International Journal of Ethics. 1914. p. 162).

From the references in the Upanisads to the different ways of attaining the highest, Rāthitāra's truth, Pauruśiṣṭi's austerity, and Maudgalya's learning (Tait. I. 9) it is clear that the thinkers of the period reflected a good deal on the problems of ethics.

The ideal of ethics is self-realization.

Moral conduct is self-realised conduct, if by the self we mean not the empirical self, but the deeper nature of man free from all fetters of selfish individuality. For the growth of the soul or the realisation of the highest, the lusts & passions of the animal self, the desires and ambitions of egoism must be subdued. "Know the self or Ātman as the Lord who sits in the chariot called the body, buddhi or intelligence is the charioteer, mind is the reins, the senses are the horses, and the objects are the roads. The self, the senses and the mind combined, the intelligent call the enjoyer. But he who has no understanding, but is weak in mind, his senses run riot like the

Vicious horses of a charioteer. He who has understanding and is strongminded, his senses are well controlled, like the good ~~horses~~ horses of a charioteer. He who is without understanding, who is thoughtless, and impure, never reaches the immortal immaterial State, but enters into the round of birth. But he who has understanding & he who is thoughtful and pure, reaches the State from which there is no return." (Katha Upanisad).

"Man is not in the least elevated above mere animalism by the possession of reason, if his reason is only employed in the same fashion as that in which animals use their instincts." (Kant: Critique of Pure Reason)

"Now Virocana, satisfied in his thought, went to the asuras and preached to them the doctrine that the bodily self alone is to be worshipped, that it alone is to be served and he who worships body and serves it gains both worlds - this and the next. Therefore they call even now a man who does not give alms here, who has not faith, and offers no sacrifices, an asura, for this is the doctrine of the asuras." (Chandogya VIII. 5. 4-5). Our life when thus guided will be at the mercy of vain hopes and fears. "The rational life will be marked by unity and consistency. The different parts of human

life will be in order & make manifest the one supreme ideal. If, instead of reason, our senses guide us, our life will be a mirror of passing passions & temporary inclinations. He who leads such a life will have to be written down like Dogberry, an ass. His life, which will be a series of disconnected & scattered episodes, will have no purpose to take, no work to carry out, no end to realise. In a rational life, every course of action before it is adopted, is brought before the bar of reason, & its capacity to serve the highest end is tested, and if found suitable, adopted by the individual." (International Journal of Ethics 1914. pp. 171-2)

A life of reason is a life of unselfish devotion to the world. Reason tells us that the individual has no interests of his own apart from the whole, of which he is a part. He is a good man who in his life subordinates personal to social ends, and he is a bad man who does the opposite. He should realise in our life and conduct that all things are in God and of God. To realise oneself is to identify oneself with a Good that is not his alone. Moral life is a God-centred life, a life of passionate love and enthusiasm for humanity, of seeking

the infinite through the finite, and not a mere selfish adventure for small ends. (~~International Journal~~ (Isā Upanisad. 1.).

Finite Objects cannot give us the satisfaction for which our soul hungers. "The infinite is bliss, there is no bliss in finite." (Chān. VII. 1. 24.) We seek finite objects, we get them but there is no satisfaction in them. "Whatever he reaches, he wishes to go beyond. If he reaches the sky, he wishes to go beyond." (Aitareya Āranyaka. II. 3. 3. 1.). Most of us are on "the road that leads to wealth in which many men perish." (Katha. II 2-3.). "No man can be made happy by wealth". "The hereafter never rises before the eyes of the careless youth, befooled by the delusion of wealth. 'This is the world' he thinks; 'there is no other'. Thus he falls again & again into the power of death." (Katha. I. 2. 6.). "Wise men knowing the nature of what is immortal, do not look for any thing stable here among things unstable." (Katha. II 4. 2.). Man is in anguish when he is separated from God & nothing else than union with God can satisfy his heart's hunger. "Miserable comforters are ye all, O that I knew where I might find Him." Many men there are who wish to realise the ideal of an absolutely worthy existence in love of another being. It is self deception to seek the fulness of love & beauty in another human being, man or woman. The perfect realisation can

only be in the Eternal. A life of holy renunciation has been recognised to be the chief path to deliverance.

The Upanisads insist on the inwardness of morality & attach great importance to the motive in conduct. Not only do the Upanisads say, "do not steal" "do not murder", but they also declare "do not covet" or "do not ~~yield~~ to hate or yield to anger, malice and greed". Conduct is judged by its subjective worth or the degree of sacrifice involved.

The Upanisads require us to look upon the whole world as born of God as the Self of man is. They admit that morality & love are forms of the highest self realisation, but only object to the word "egoism" with all its associations. Yājñavalkya maintains that self love lies at the foundation of all other kinds of love. The love of the finite has only instrumental value, while love of the eternal has intrinsic worth. "The son is dear for the sake of the eternal in him". Finite Objects help us to realise the Self. Only the love of the Eternal is supreme love, which is its own reward, for God is love. (Kāmā-Upaniṣad - Brh. III 9.11). To love God is bliss; not to love Him is misery. To love God is to possess knowledge & immortality; not to love Him is to be lost in doubt & delusion, sorrow & death. (Brh. IV. 4.5). In all true religion it is the same dominating motive that

we have. "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me, love death." (Prov. viii. 36. See Isā Up.). The sinners are the slayers of their souls, according to the Upanisads. "Ātmahano janāh."

The Upanisads ask us to renounce selfish endeavours, but not all interests. The Ideal Sage has desires, though they are not selfish desires." "He who has no desires, who is beyond desires, whose desires are satisfied, whose desire is the soul, being even Brahman. Obtains Brahman." (Both. iv 4. 6.). Kāma, which we are asked to renounce is only animal desire. The true saint is described as Śānta, Śrānta, dānta, uparata, samāhita. These all imply the conquest of passion. Desire as such is not forbidden. It all depends upon the Object. The desires for salvation & knowledge are highly commended. The filial piety of a Nacikētas, the intense love & devotion of a Savitri are not faults. The Lord of all creation has Kāma in the sense of desire. "He desired (akāmayata) let me become many"? If the Lord has desires, why should not we.? We do not find in the Upanisads any sweeping condemnation of affections. Tapas means the development of soul force, the freeing of the soul from slavery to body. "Severe thinking or energising of mind", "whose tapas consists of thought itself." (Mundaka I. 1. 9.). Life is a great festival to which we are invited. That we might share tapas

or self renunciation, dāna or liberality, ārjavam 25
or right dealing, ahimsā or non injury to life,
and Satya vacanam or truthfulness. "Not by
Karma, not by offspring, not by wealth, but by
renunciation can immortality be gained".
(Nārāyanīya IV. 21.). The Chāndogya Upanisad
says "Śraddhā tapah" (V. 10.) Faith is asceticism.
To realise freedom from the bondage of outward
things one need not go to the solitude of the
forest & increase his privations and penances
that so the last remnants of earthly dependence
might be thrown away. "By renunciation
thou should'st enjoy" says the Īśā Upanisad.
A call to renunciation in the sense of killing
out the sense of separateness and developing
disinterested love is the essence of all true
religion. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest
is not quickened except it die" (1. Cor. XV. 36)

There was a change in Indian thought
after the Vedic period. (See Rhys David's "Buddhism,
Hibbert Lectures" p.p. 21-22). During the period of
the hymns of the Rg-Veda there was a craving
selfish abandonment to pleasure. The
Spiritual instinct of the human soul
asserted itself & in the period of the Upanisads
the protest against the tyranny of the senses
was heard in clear tones. But this spirit
of renunciation did not degenerate in the
Upanisads into the insane asceticism
of a later day, which revelled in the burning
of bodies & such other practices. The righteous

man is not he who retires to a cloister, but he who lives in the world and loves the objects of the world, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the infinite they contain, the universal they conceal. Human love is a shadow of the divine love. We may love our wives for the sake of the joy that burns at the heart of things. "In truth, not for the husband's sake is the husband dear" says the Upanisad. The objects of the world are represented not as lures to sin but as pathways to divine bliss. When once we have the right vision, we may have wealth etc (Tait. I. 4.) "Tato me śriyam āvaha" "After that bring me wealth". And Śaṁkara points out that wealth is an evil to the unregenerate, but not to the man of wisdom. "To be detached is to be loosened from every tie which binds a soul to the earth, to be dependent on nothing sublunary, to lean on nothing terrestrial. It is to care nothing what other men choose to say of think of us or do; to go about our work as soldiers go to battle, without a care for the consequences, to account credit, honour, name, easy circumstances, comfort, human affection, just nothing at all when any religious obligation requires sacrifice of them." (Newman. University Sketches, p. 127.) The Upanisads demand a work of ~~spiritual~~ physical preparation for the spiritual ~~preparation & Arabic~~ fight.

Cleansing, fasting, continence, solitude, etc. as purificatory of the body, are enjoined. "May my body become fit, may my tongue become extremely sweet, may I hear much in my ears." (Tait. I. 4.). Again in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VIII .4.3.) we are told that the world of Brahman belongs to those who find it by brahmacarya. Brahmacarya is the discipline a student has to undergo when studying under a guru. It is not an ascetic withdrawal from the world; for the same Upaniṣad in VIII. 5. makes brahmacarya equivalent to the performing of sacrifices. The body is the servant of the soul, not its prison. There is no indication in the Upaniṣads that we must give up life, mind, consciousness, intelligence, etc.

"The Indian sages, as the Upaniṣads speak of them," according to Gough, "seek for participation in divine life, not by pure feeling, high thought, strenuous endeavour, not by unceasing effort to learn the true and do the right," but by the crushing out of every feeling and every thought, by vacuity, apathy, inertion & ecstasy." (Philosophy of the Upaniṣads". pp. 266-267) The aim of the Upaniṣads according to Eucken is "not so much a penetration and overcoming of the world as a separation & liberation from it, not an

enhancement of life in order to maintain it even in face of the hardest resistance, but an abatement, a softening of all hardness, a dissolution, a fading away, a profound contemplation." (Main Currents. p. 13.) The view here stated that the Upanisads demand a release from the conditions which constitute human life is a complete misconception. The Upanisads do not ask us to renounce life, do not taboo desires as such. The false asceticism which regards life as a dream & the world as an illusion, which has obsessed some thinkers in India as well as in Europe, is foreign to the prevailing tones of the Upanisads. There is no call to forsake the world, only to give up the dream of its separate reality. The Upanisad conception of the world is a direct challenge to the spiritual activity of man. A philosophy of resignation, an ascetic code of ethics, and a temper of languid world-weariness are an insult to the Creator of the universe, a sin against ourselves and the world which has a claim on us. The Upanisads believe in God, & so believe in the world as well.

The Upanisads give us a code of duties without which the moral ideal will be an uncertain guide. All forms of conduct where passion is

controlled and reason reigns supreme, where there is self-transcendence in the sense of freedom from the narrowness of selfish individuality, where we work because we are all co-operators in the divine scheme, are virtuous, & their opposites, vicious. Restraint, liberality and mercy are virtues. (Brh. V. 2.). The principle that the left hand should not know what the right hand does is expressed in the following words: "Give with faith, give not without faith, give in plenty, give with bashfulness, give with fear, give with sympathy." (Tait. I. 11.). In Chāndogya (III. 17) meditation, charity, right dealing, non-injury to life and truthfulness are laid down as right forms of conduct. (See also I. 9. 12.). The Upanisads consider love of brute creation to be a great virtue. It is a crime to kill a deer for sport or worry a cat for amusement. To attain conquest over passions, a discipline is sometimes enjoined. The Indian thinkers believe in the dependence of mind on body and so prescribe purity of food as necessary for the purity of mind. (āhāra śuddhau sattva śuddhih). A distinction is made between tapas or forcible constraint of passions & nyāsa or spiritual renunciation. Tapas is for the vānaprastha who is in the lower stage, while nyāsa is for the sannyāsin. The yogic practices of concentration, contemplation, etc. are to

be met with. "The wise should sink speech in the mind and the mind into buddhi." (Katha - I. 3.10). Meditation & Concentration as means of cleansing the mind are also enjoined.. But even this exaltation of contemplative life is not necessarily an escape from reality. It is only the means by which we can see the ultimate truths of things. "with sharp & subtle mind is He beheld." (Ibid. III. 12.). The four āśramas of the brahmacārin or student, gṛhastha or house holder, Vānāprastha or anchorite, & Sannyāsin or wandering mendicant, are mentioned as representing the different steps by which man gradually purifies himself from all earthly taint & becomes fit for his spiritual home.

Retirement from the world is enjoined for every Aryan when once his duties to society are fulfilled. The simple but devout minds of India were haunted by dreams of imperishable beauty and echoes of unceasing music. A severe training of body and soul is prescribed for the ascetic who alone can live such an ideal life. His life, his garments, his food, must be governed by strictest purity & poverty. What makes an ascetic great is his holiness and humility. The true sannyasin is he who, with self-control and spiritual wisdom, suffers for mankind. The Upanisads declare that the

knowers of Ātman relinquish all selfish interests & become mendicants.

To the thinkers of the Upanisads, marriage is a religious sacrament, a form of divine service. The home is sacred and no religious ~~sacrament~~ ceremony is complete unless the wife takes part in it. If Buddhism failed to secure a permanent hold on the mind of India it was because it exalted the ideal of celibacy over that of marriage and allowed all to enter the highest order of Sannyāsins regardless of their previous preparation for it. The sannyāsins are the ambassadors of God upon earth, witnessing to the beauty of holiness, the power of humility, the joy of poverty & the freedom of service.

The rules of caste prescribe the duties to society, & these duties must be fulfilled by man, whatever his lot may be. Brāhmin hood does not depend on birth but on character. The whole philosophy of the Upanisads tends towards the softening of the divisions & the undermining of class hatreds & antipathies. Sanat kumāra, the Kshatriya, instructs Nārada the Brāhmin about the ultimate Mystery of things. Higher philosophy & religion were by no means confined to the Brahmin class. It was a period of keen intellectual life & even the ordinary people were interested in

the problems of philosophy. Women had equal rights with men in the spiritual struggle for salvation.

It is true that the Upanisads lay stress on knowledge as the means to salvation - "Tarati śokam ātmavit." the knower of Atman crosses all sorrows. "Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati" the knower of Brahman becomes indeed Brahman. Because the Upanisads lay stress on Jñāna & look upon all morality as a preliminary to it, there are critics who contend that the Upanisads in their enthusiasm for Jñāna relegate the will to a subordinate place. Deussen says "Moral conduct cannot contribute directly to the attainment of knowledge, but only indirectly to the attainment of the knowledge that brings emancipation. For this knowledge is not a becoming something which had no previous existence, & might be brought about by appropriate means, but it is the perception of that which previously existed from all eternity." (Philosophy of the Upanisads. p. 362).

But the Upanisads do not advocate knowledge in the narrow sense of the term as the sole means to salvation. "That self cannot be gained by the knowledge of the Veda or by understanding or by much learning." (Mundaka. III. 2. 3) knowledge should be accompanied by virtue. Jñāna is more than

mere intellectual ability, it is the soul sense. The jñāna which the Upaniṣads emphasize is the faith which becomes the living law of the soul's energy. As the tree bears fruit, knowledge must realise itself in work. When we have jñāna we are said to possess truth, make it our own & be transformed by it. This is not possible for "one who has not ceased from wicked conduct, who is not calm, who is not collected & in whose heart there is not peace." Rāmānuja therefore interprets knowledge to be dhyāna, meditation or upāsana, worship. The Upaniṣads insist that works must be performed with knowledge. Without faith in the transcendent, mere works languish. (See Bṛh III 8. 10). The Upaniṣads condemn the rites & sacrifices performed with the sole idea of bringing about large returns of outward good either in this world or the next. The Upaniṣads insist on a life of spirit which combines both jñāna and karma.

The ideal of morality cannot be reached so long as we remain at the moral level, but can be reached when we rise to religion. At the moral level the two sides of our nature, the finite & the infinite are in conflict. The finite breathes egoism or ahaṁkāra & gives the individual the sense of

this separateness from the unreal. The infinite in him rushes forth to realise itself in the world. It is when we deny this exclusiveness of our individuality & therewith the sense of separateness that we enter the joy of religion & realise the full freedom of the Spirit. In the face of disasters and dreads, death and disease, the conviction that in spite of the apparent discord & contradiction all things work together for good, cheers us. Morality requires the postulate of religion. God gives us the security that all is well with the world & man is bound to win. "When a man finds his peace and resting place in that invisible, intangible, inexpressible, unfathomable, then has he attained to peace. If, however, a man admits therein an interval a separation, then his unrest continues; it is, moreover the unrest of one who imagines himself wise". (Tait. II. 7.).
Religion is the inspiration of morality. Then is the weakness of finite endowment overcome, & the finite self becomes endowed with a meaning and a mission. When once this consciousness is reached, the continuance of the cessation of bodily existence becomes a matter of indifference. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright:

for the end of that man is peace." (Psa. XXXVII 35-37).

As the intuitional level goes beyond the categories of intellect, even so does the religious level pass beyond the distinctions of good and evil. He who reaches the highest is above all laws. (Kausit-aki. II.8.). He fears nothing & does not trouble himself about his deeds & misdeeds in the past. "He the immortal, is beyond both, beyond good and evil; what is done and what is left undone cause him no pain, his domain is affected by no action." This admits the possibility of blotting out the effects of a sinful life by a sincere change of heart. On this principle is based the Christian doctrine that no amount of sin is a bar to salvation provided an act of sure repentance has been performed. When once the soul attains the real, his will is God's will & his life, God's life. He has joined the whole & thus become the whole. There is no more distinction between God & the Universe. Dr Bosanquet, in his book on "What religion is", brings out this fundamental oneness on the highest condition. "In the purity of love & will with the supreme Good, you are not only "saved" but you are 'free' & 'strong' ---- You will not be helped by trying to divide up the unity & tell how much comes from

"You" and how much from "God". You have
got to deepen yourself in it or let it deepen
itself in you, whatever phrase expresses the
fact best to your mind". (pp. 20-21. "as a
drop of water is diffused in a jar of wine,"
taking its taste & colour, "as molten iron"
becomes like to fire and casts off its form,
& as the air transfused with sunlight is
transformed into that same light so that
it seems not illumined but itself the light,
thus in the saints every human affection
must in ineffable mode be liquefied of
itself & transfused into the will of God.
How could God be all, if in man anything
of man remained? A certain substance
will remain, but in another form, another
glory, another power." (St. Bernard, quoted
in "Mind" 1913. p. 329).

Unfortunately this central truth of
religious life is not sufficiently under-
stood by even good students of Indian
thought. The latest critic of the Upanisads
Dr Hume, observes: "There is a wide difference
between the Upanisadic theory & the theory
of the Greek Sages, that the man who has
knowledge should thereby become virtuous
in character or that the result of teaching
should be a virtuous life. Here the possession
of some metaphysical knowledge actually
cancels all past sins & even permits the
knower unblushingly to continue in
"what seems to be much evil" with-

perfect impunity, although such acts are heinous crimes & are disastrous in their effect for others who lack that kind of knowledge. (Introduction to "The Thirteen Principal Upanisads. p.60):

"We have already said that the knowledge of the Upanisads is not metaphysical acumen or dialectical subtlety, but the realisation of the highest as the supreme power at the heart of the universe. What Dr Hume calls "the possession of some metaphysical knowledge" is possible only for the pure in heart. The free can do what they choose with perfect impunity, but this freedom is not "the madness of license". (Rabin: Tagore. "Sadhana" p. 18.). The mystic becomes a law unto himself and the lord of himself & of the world in which he lives. In the scheme of the world we have three classes of beings: (1) Those who strive after self-assertion & gratification of appetites, the bad men, who if ever they practice virtue, do so for selfish reasons, such as hope of heaven or fear of hell.

2) Men who know the law and try to conform to it with great effort & trouble since their selves are subject to discord.

(3) The saviours of the world who have overcome the conflict of life & attained peace. They know the purpose of life.

and live up to it unconsciously & automatically. The Upanisad asks us in cases of doubt & difficulty to conduct ourselves in the manner in which the knowers of Brahman devoted to duty would do. (Tait. I. 11). These great men go on doing their daily work, diffusing virtue as the star diffuses light & the flower perfume, without their being aware of it. Every man can realise such a condition. According to Christian thinkers, one such complete manifestation of God in man is in the personality of Jesus. The Upanisads declare that all men have in them the possibility of rising to their full divine stature and can realise it if they strive for it.

XVI.

The Religious Consciousness.

Religion is essentially a matter of life and experience. The Upanisads prescribe three stages in the growth of the religious consciousness - viz. 1) Sravana, which literally means the listening. 2) Manana or reflection. and 3) Nididhyāsana or contemplative meditation. Udayana in his Kusumāñjali 1.3. quotes a verse which mentions 1) āgama or scripture. 2) Anumāna or inference & 3) dhyāna or meditation.

The first stage points to the place of tradition in religious life. For the initiation